THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, the 7th March 1958.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at two of the clock, Mr. Chairman (THE HON. DR. P. V. CHERIAN) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

District Educational Officers

* 50 *Q.*—SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN (on behalf of Sri V. R. Ranganathan): Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of posts of District Educational Officers that remained vacant during the years 1955–56 and 1956–57 and the reasons therefor; and

(*b*) whether the schools in the districts were inspected during these years?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: (*a*) Three posts of District Educational Officers were vacant for some time during 1955–56 and two posts for some time during 1956–57 consequent on the transfers of officers to other posts and the extension of leave by another officer.

(*b*) In 1955–56, in two of the three districts where the posts of District Educational Officers were vacant for some time, all the schools were inspected. In other cases, not all, but some of the schools were inspected.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY: Are these posts filled up by direct recruitment or by promotion from subordinate ranks?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: Both methods are adopted.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY: Is any percentage reserved for B. T. Assistants working in aided institutions in these posts?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM: There is recruitment from the teaching personnel in aided institutions also.

Foodgrains

* 51 *Q.*—SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(*a*) the procedure followed in the sale of foodgrains through the Fair Price Shops in the State;

(*b*) the average quantity of rice sold during the months of November and December 1957;

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(*c*) the price fixed per Madras measure; and

(*d*) whether any quantity of wheat was sold in the Fair Price Shops during this period?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: (*a*) Up to 25th November 1957, rice was being supplied to the consumers through the Fair Price Shops at 2 Madras measures per adult per day in Madras City and urban centres in the districts, and 1 Madras measure per adult per day in other places. From 25th November 1957 onwards, rice is being supplied at 1 Madras measure per adult per day in Madras City and urban centres at ½ Madras measure per adult per day in other places.

Wheat was being supplied direct to the merchants and fair price shopkeepers by the Regional Director for Food, Madras, up to 25th November 1957, subject to the condition that not more than 2 Madras measures per head per day should be sold to each consumer. From 25th November 1957, wheat is being supplied to consumers, from the fair price shops in addition to rice alone, at their option up to 5 Madras measures per head per day.

(*b*) November 1957—4,860 tons.

December 1957—3,899 tons.

(*c*) The retail selling price of coarse rice to the consumers through the Fair Price Shops at different centres in the State varies from 71 to 75 nP. per Madras measure. The retail issue price of American fine rice which is sold in the Fair Price Shops in Madras City is 85 nP. per Madras measure.

(*d*) With effect from 25th November 1957 wheat is being sold through the Fair Price Shops up to 5 Madras measures per head per day. A total quantity of 3,656 tons of wheat was sold to the public through the Fair Price Shops in the State during November and December 1957.

SRI V. CHAKKARAI CHETTY: May I know whether wheat is as popular as rice in our State? My own experience is that it is not so. Has the Minister from his experience been able to discover that wheat is being preferred to rice by the people in our State?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I cannot say that wheat is as popular as rice in this State. But I may point out that wheat is not unpopular with the people of our State.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN: Have the Government come to the definite decision that fair price shops should not be continued beyond 1st April?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: Yes, Sir.

SRI A. M. ALLAPICHAI: Suppose there is a sudden rise in prices?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Deputy Chairman's question is hypothetical.

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THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : We will again consider the situation when that contingency arises.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : May I know whether the Government made a profit in the whole transaction or whether the scheme was worked on a 'no profit no loss' basis?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : There is no question of profit. The Government of India undertook to make good the deficit in the matter.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : The very fact that 3,000 to 4,000 tons of rice were sold through fair price shops is a clear pointer to the fact that there is heavy demand at the shops.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : There is no particular attraction about fair price shops as such. Wherever fairly good rice is sold, it is taken advantage of by the people.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : May I know whether the object of bringing down the price level has been achieved by the opening of the fair price shops?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : The main object was that the poor people should be enabled to get rice at lower prices when the prices soared very high.

Wheat allotted to the Madras State

* 52 *Q.*—SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(*a*) the quantity of wheat allotted to the Madras State for the year 1957–58; and

(*b*) the price per ton at which it is supplied?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : (*a*) During the ten months in 1957–58, a quantity of 53,893 tons of wheat has been allotted to the Madras State. Figures for February and March 1958 are not available.

(*b*) Wheat is supplied by the Government of India at Rs. 381·01 per ton, ex-godown.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Is the Hon. Minister aware of a Press report that wheat is being sold at fairly cheap prices and that merchants are buying wheat in large quantities and exporting the same outside Madras?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : That has not been brought to my notice. If wheat is not required here and if it is sold outside, we need not very much worry about it.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : I think my question has not been clearly understood or I did not put my question clearly. Because the prices at which wheat is sold in Madras are cheaper, merchants purchase wheat here and export the same.